

Kidney Health Connection

Fall/Winter 2001

Texas Department of Health
Associateship for Family Health

KHC Begins Program and ASKIT-Web Training

KHC has been conducting training for dialysis facility staff on the Automated System for Kidney Information Tracking (ASKIT). Training began in February with seven social workers in attendance. On day one, social workers attended a half day training in Austin that consisted of a program overview of KHC's application process, eligibility requirements and benefits.

On day two, social workers were introduced to ASKIT-Web, in which they began entering applications for benefits. Providers learned how to review recipient records, to check eligibility, benefits, and to submit change requests and travel reports on-line.



Austin participants entering applications for benefits and checking eligibility.

The training is designed for staff preparing and submitting KHC applications. Completion of training is required before facilities are allowed to submit applications on-line. Training is conducted on a roll-out basis. Due to the limited space and technical nature of the ASKIT on-line training, classes were limited to one staff member per facility.

KHC began training off-site at the Public Health Regional offices in July to accommodate providers who could not attend the trainings in Austin. Training has been conducted in Arlington, Houston, Lubbock and San Antonio. In August, staff traveled to Arizona and California to begin training medical claims and billing staff. For more information, call Rhonnda Jones at 512-685-3124.

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Drug Benefits Change: New Drugs Added

The following drugs were added to the KHC Reimbursable Drug list, effective September 1, 2001: Actos, Avapro, Atacand, Hectoral, Miralax, Rapamune and Cytovene. Cytovene requires a prior authorization by KHC staff and

will be covered for a 34 days supply. Reimbursement must be for coverage within 90 days immediately following release from the hospital after transplant.

The "Kidney Health Connection" is a quarterly Newsletter published by the Bureau of Kidney Health Care of the Texas Department of Health.

It is provided for KHC recipients, providers, and other interested citizens in the renal community. For more information please contact:

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Patient Pharmaceutical Assistance Directory Link Available

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) produces a directory of patient assistance drug programs. Each program has information on how to make a request for assistance, what prescription medications are covered, and basic eligibility criteria. To link to this site, go to: www.phrma.org/patients/ and click on the 1999 - 2000 Directory.

Work Incentives - How Can They Help The ESRD Patient?

Can patients with Medicaid maintain Medicaid and work? Yes, Section 1619(b) of the Social Security Act provides some protection for these beneficiaries. To qualify for continuing Medicaid coverage, a person must:

- Have been eligible for an SSI cash payment for at least 1 month
- Still meet the disability requirement
- Still meet all other non-disability SSI requirements
- Need Medicaid benefits to continue to work
- Have gross earnings that are insufficient to replace SSI, Medicaid, and publicly funded attendant care services

For more information go online to:

www.ssa.gov/work/ResourcesToolkit/Health/1619b.html

Many new work incentives will be coming forth through "Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act" (TTWWIA) legislation that is being implemented in various phases throughout the country. Texas Senate Bill 831 provides for certain recipients with disabilities. This will allow people between ages 16 and 64 who would be considered eligible for SSI except for earnings that exceed the established SSI amounts to continue to receive Medicare and Medicaid while earning an income. Senate Bill 831 is being piloted in three areas of the state - Tarrant County, El Paso, and San Angelo. Houston and Galveston are serving as control groups. Effectiveness of the program shall be evaluated by December 1, 2002. For more information, call Mary Beth Callahan at the Dallas Transplant Institute at 214- 358-2300, extension 6290.

KHC Changes Deputyships and Joins the Associateship for Family Health

KHC and County Indigent Health Care are now in the Deputyship for Programs under the Associateship for Family Health. Other Bureaus in the Associateship for Family Health include the Bureau of Women's Health, Bureau of Children's Health and the Bureau of Nutrition Services. The change in deputyship occurred during the transfer of the Deputyship of Health Care Financing Medicaid programs to the Health and Human Services Commission.

Staff Spotlight

You talk to them all the time, but are you able to place the face with the voice? KHC introduces our Information Resource Specialists...

Adolfo Alvarez

Two times is a charm for Adolfo, who worked in KHC from April 1990 through November 1994 and then returned in February 1999. Adolfo says what he likes best about his job is talking to people and helping them out. When Adolfo is not working he enjoys getting involved in church activities such as Cursillo and the Knights of Columbus. He also likes the great outdoors. He is a native Austinite and has 7 sisters and 2 brothers.



Anna Molinar

When speaking with Anna, one tends to think that you've known her all your life. Anna has been with KHC since October 1996. Anna enjoys working with the other phone staff, Adolfo and Carmen, "We are like family. We all learn from each other and help each other out," she says.



"Throughout the years I have built good working relationships with Social Workers and patients alike that make my job a lot easier. I even know a few of my patient's KHC numbers by heart. I also enjoy hearing that Kidney Health Care is providing help with medicines or paying for Medicare premiums. Whatever the case might be, I enjoy helping our clients." Anna is married and has an adorable five-year old son.

Carmen Talbert

Carmen has been with KHC for eight years. Her favorite task is being able to assist patients and Social Workers with any information they may need. Carmen says, "It makes me happy to know that I can make a patient's day a little brighter or a Social Worker's job a little easier." Carmen enjoys spending time with her husband, teenage daughter and her beautiful 5 month-old baby boy.



Who's Who at KHC!

Several new staff have joined our team since the last issue of the *Kidney Health Connection*.

Joining the Customer Services Section are Dana Achten, Thomas Mead and Jim Ward. Dana came to KHC in January as an Administrative Technician and screens and enters KHC applications. Dana previously worked at the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. Thomas, Eligibility Specialist, came to KHC in February after several years as a consultant for a local firm. Jim, Eligibility Specialist, has over 10 years experience determining eligibility and was previously employed with the Texas Rehabilitation Commission before joining KHC in February. Jim and Thom's goals are to provide accurate and timely decisions on KHC applications for benefits. In May, Christina Mosley joined KHC as a Contract Specialist. Chris previously worked for Managed Care. Elle Adair came aboard in December as an Administrative Technician and she assists the Customer Services Section by answering KHC's main line.

Hands On With ASKIT-Web....



During training in Lubbock, Tamika King, ASKIT trainer shows Dan Wise, a social worker from Midland Dialysis Center the benefits of ASKIT-Web.



Tell us what you would like to see in the next issue of the *Kidney Health Connection*! You may call

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